

TESTIMONY of PATRICIA E. MOORADIAN
CHAIRMAN, MICHIGAN TRAVEL COMMISSION and
PRESIDENT, THE HENRY FORD
MICHIGAN HOUSE NATURAL RESOURCES, TOURISM and OUTDOOR RECREATION COMMITTEE
February 1, 2011, 9:00 AM, House Office Building, Room 307, Lansing, Michigan

Good morning, Chairman Foster and members of the House Natural Resources, Tourism and Outdoor Recreation Committee. I'm Patricia Mooradian, Chairman of the Michigan Travel Commission and President of The Henry Ford, Michigan's leading cultural tourism destination. I thank you for the opportunity to address the Committee this morning to voice my support and that of the Travel Commission and The Henry Ford for House Bill 4160.

The Michigan Travel Commission has been working diligently and directly over the past several years with Michigan's tourism industry to sustain and strengthen the industry's significant positive impact on Michigan's economy. Tourism is arguably Michigan's second or third largest industry. It's an \$18 billion enterprise in our state responsible for employing some 200,000 Michigan workers. It is a varied and diverse sector of Michigan's economy that leverages Michigan's unparalleled inventory of natural, cultural, recreational and heritage assets. It brings visitors and their discretionary spending to our state and its treasury through direct spending and the generation of significant sales and gas tax revenues.

My professional background is in business and marketing, a basic tenet of which is that no matter how good your inventory of products and services might be, its value will go unrealized unless people are made aware of it and are drawn to it in a compelling way. And that's precisely what the award-winning Pure Michigan campaign does for the Michigan tourism industry, Michigan's treasury, and the hundreds of thousands of Michigan workers who depend on the industry for their livelihoods.

In regard to its worth as a State investment, full funding for the Pure Michigan campaign as called for in HB 4160 is a "no-brainer," as then gubernatorial candidate Rick Snyder described it during his campaign. Now Governor Rick Snyder has called for the legislature to provide the full

and permanent funding needed to maintain and strengthen the already impressive return on investment the Pure Michigan campaign continues to generate. That ROI, both significant and immediate, is why the Michigan Travel Commission unanimously passed a resolution in 2010 calling for full and permanent funding of this incredibly successful marketing and promotional initiative.

While we realize that HB 4160 would only provide sufficient funding for this year's Pure Michigan marketing effort, it is critically important to sustain the national momentum that this campaign has generated since its launch. The short-term fix that HB 4160 affords will provide the time necessary for the legislature to devise the permanent funding solution that this campaign both deserves and needs.

In discussions about State investment in the Pure Michigan campaign, some skeptics have asked why those within Michigan's tourism industry don't do more themselves to promote travel and tourism to our state and their properties. But those who voice that concern do not realize how much the private sector of Michigan's tourism industry already invests in marketing and promotion. As an example, our annual marketing budget at The Henry Ford totals approximately \$4 million. And, in a further demonstration of our belief in the investment worthiness and effectiveness of the Pure Michigan campaign, we have recently entered into a new partnership with Travel Michigan with a half-a-million dollar investment on our part that will provide national exposure for The Henry Ford within the Pure Michigan campaign. By advertising nationally, we believe we will attract even more visitors from throughout the United States to experience our world-class tourism product and draw further attention to Michigan as a compelling travel and tourism destination.

Einstein once wisely said, "Not everything that counts can be counted." And there is something significant about the Pure Michigan campaign that doesn't lend itself to statistical measure. The Pure Michigan campaign matters, in large degree, to the perception of Michigan it generates for those living outside and those living inside the state. Michigan's recent national

reputation has been one of a state in decline. Our economy began declining earlier, deeper and for longer than those of other states. Our major manufacturing industry underwent tremendous turmoil and came close to disappearing. And we were the only state in the union to have a net loss in population over the past ten year period. Those are all depressing colors with which to paint Michigan's national portrait. But the Pure Michigan campaign offers a different more vibrant and vital palette. It lets the rest of America know what incomparable treasures—natural, cultural, heritage and recreational—Michigan offers. And, if not more importantly, it reminds those of us who call Michigan home, how fortunate, despite current economic challenges, we are to be of this place. The campaign helps remind us what drew us here and what keeps us here. That's not something that can easily be counted, but I believe that all of us here and throughout Michigan know that it's something that profoundly counts.

Thank you for your time and attention. I urge you and your colleagues to support HB 4160 and the Pure Michigan campaign.